

# Towards an Author-Centered Open Access Monograph Program: Understanding Open Access Cultures in Scholarly Publishing

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**Abstract:** Author attitudes towards open access (OA) remain an important area of investigation in academic publishing. The successful implementation of new OA infrastructure and business models depends on their reception within scholarly communities. This article proposes “open access culture”—the set of beliefs, practices, and attitudes towards OA publishing shared by members of an academic field—as a framework to understand how OA innovations are and will be received by different scholarly communities. The investigation of OA culture helps identify the needs of individual academic fields (e.g., the importance of print publishing for a particular field), thus foregrounding author preferences in the publishing process. The University of Michigan Press (UMP) is drawing on the OA culture framework to aid the implementation of its OA monograph initiative. UMP has undertaken research (an author survey as well as editor, author, and librarian interviews) to understand how the monograph initiative will integrate different fields. This article presents results of this research demonstrating the application of the OA culture framework to several fields, as well the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences (HSS) more broadly. This is one way that university presses may take an author-centered approach to OA publishing programs, one that foregrounds the needs of individual authors and considers their unique disciplinary context. Moreover, the article offers a recent view of sentiments towards OA in the HSS and thus helps to contextualize the current OA landscape.

## Introduction: Open Access Publishing Cultures

Understanding author attitudes towards open access publishing has been a recurrent line of investigation in the last several decades (Rowley et al. 2017; Creaser et al. 2010). The emergence of open access as a new economic model and new form of scholarly communication has elicited a range of responses from the academic community; while some scholars have noted the positive transformative possibilities of OA (Lake 2012), others have regarded it with suspicion and hostility (Osborne 2013). These responses to open access, however, are not static. As funding for OA publishing increases and the

number of platforms for OA scholarship expands, it is necessary to continually reassess how OA is perceived and used by researchers and the academic community.

Among the many variables that account for OA use and perception is academic disciplinary affiliation. Recent studies have shown significant differences in OA publication output across different fields (Severin et al. 2020), with some researchers calling for future investigations to “continue to explore discipline specific concerns” (Rodriguez 2014). Such research is pressing given the complexities of establishing new publishing technologies in knowledge-producing communities with different values and communication norms (Hurd 2000). For example, the implementation of new OA infrastructure, such as institutional repositories at university libraries, has sometimes failed to gain widespread traction among all members of a campus community because such programs used a one-size-fits-all approach to OA (Xia 2011). This suggests that a detailed understanding of OA practice within specific academic fields may be necessary for the most successful acceptance of new OA infrastructure within scholarly communities. Moreover, investigating OA practice based on disciplinary affiliation increases the likelihood that scholar-generated models of OA publishing are integrated into publishing platforms, making researchers essential stakeholders in publishing technology development (Mandler 2013, 556–557).

This article advances “open access culture” as a potential framework to address this problem. Open access culture is defined as the set of practices, beliefs, and attitudes towards OA publishing shared by members of an academic community.<sup>1</sup> This framework of open access culture adds specificity and descriptive thickness to current assessments of OA attitudes and usage. In the study discussed below, the following subject areas were used as guiding points of inquiry for describing open access cultures:

- OA Activity
  - How often do scholars in the field publish their research OA?
  - Does the field use OA repositories?
  - How many publication venues exist for scholars to publish OA?
  - Why do scholars in the field choose to publish OA?
- OA Knowledge
  - Can scholars in the field define OA? *How* do they define OA?
  - Do scholars in the field understand different OA funding models and copyright?
  - Are common misconceptions about OA circulating in the scholarly community?
- OA Prestige and Perception
  - Do scholars in the field view OA publications suspiciously or as less prestigious than non-OA publications?

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1. This definition is partly adapted from Buchanan (2018). It is also worth noting that the “culture concept” is contested within the field of anthropology and, similarly, the definition of open access culture is a descriptive heuristic. Swan (2006) discusses “the culture of Open Access” but does not closely theorize this concept. Others, such as Hurd (2000), have examined how disciplinary cultures have shaped scholarly communication.

- Are OA publications viewed negatively by tenure committees?
- OA Funding
  - Is publishing OA financially feasible for scholars in this field?
  - Are there specific grants or awards in the field for scholars to publish their work OA?
  - How do scholars typically fund OA publications?
- OA Barriers and Reservations
  - For what reasons do scholars *not* publish their work OA?
  - Are there particular problems with archives or media (e.g., reproduction rights for images) that prevent scholars from publishing OA?
- Field Population and Publishing Needs
  - Are there certain populations within a field that tend to be more favorable towards OA (e.g., subfields, institutional affiliations, faculty rank)?
  - Are there populations that tend to be less favorable towards OA?

## Open Access Cultures and University of Michigan Press's Fund to Mission Initiative

The framework of open access culture was developed as part of a research project to aid the University of Michigan Press's (UMP) Fund to Mission initiative. This initiative aims to convert 75% of the press's frontlist monographs to open access by the end of 2023 with no cost to authors. By seeking investment from university budgets and contributing libraries, Fund to Mission seeks to create a sustainable model for OA monograph publishing in the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences (HSS). At the beginning stages of implementing Fund to Mission, it became clear that the press needed more information to understand current OA landscapes in individual academic fields, especially regarding author hesitancy towards OA. Such information was necessary for helping editors make informed decisions about manuscript development and ultimately to make the OA initiative centered on author needs.<sup>2</sup>

To gain a better understanding of these OA landscapes, members of UMP undertook a research project to help the implementation of Fund to Mission.<sup>3</sup> This project included the research of OA resources, interviews with various press stakeholders, and an author survey. During project planning, the research team developed the concept of open access culture to scaffold data collection and analysis. This was deemed necessary due to the absence of a suitable heuristic in the scholarly literature for understanding fields within the HSS (UMP's primary area of monograph publishing). Most studies that have examined OA attitudes by disciplinary affiliation considered HSS as a single undifferentiated

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2. The Publishing Without Walls initiative (Fenlon et al. 2017) conducted a similar study in order to inform the development of their "library-based scholarly publishing service model."

3. This research project was conducted from January 2022 to May 2022.

category in comparison to other large disciplinary groupings, such as natural sciences or business (Severin et al. 2020; Nicholas et al. 2020). Open access culture, it was understood, could account for nuanced differences within the broader HSS category. Moreover, centering the individual cultures of academic fields was viewed as one way to make the Fund to Mission initiative fundamentally author centered; it could foreground the needs of individuals within academic communities during the publishing process.

## UMP Study Scope

The partial results of the UMP study on open access cultures are presented below. First, the study's methods are discussed. These methods were threefold: background research with secondary sources, structured interviews, and a survey of past UMP authors. Next, using data collected during the study, the article will present an overview of open access cultures in three academic fields: Asian studies, classical studies, and political science.<sup>4</sup> These fields were chosen for the study because they were considered places of strategic importance for the UMP's OA initiatives. Furthermore, the project's initial research indicated that UMP-affiliated authors in these disciplines would be effective sources during interviews. Finally, the article will offer a general discussion of OA culture in the HSS broadly, drawing on the study's research and data.

## Study Methods

### *Structured Interviews*

Structured interviews were conducted with five UMP-affiliated editors/administrators, four librarians, and seven authors (six UMP authors and one non-UMP author).<sup>5</sup> These interviews lasted between 20 to 40 minutes, and interviewees responded to standardized, pre-written questions (see Appendix 1). In addition, interviews included unstructured discussion initiated both by the interviewer and interviewee. Many interviewees (including librarians, authors, and editors) stated that they did not possess a comprehensive understanding about OA in their field. The interviews, then, offered high-resolution "snapshots" of OA cultures within these different fields but could not be

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4. The complete study examined three additional academic fields (archaeology; American studies; and dance, theater, and performance studies) that are also key areas of monograph publishing for the press. Due to space constraints here, only Asian studies, classical studies, and political science are discussed. These fields are highlighted because they represent three contrasting models of disciplinary structure (in size, methods, etc.) and are shown to approach OA publishing in diverging manners, thus highlighting the utility of the UMP study's methodology.

5. Other studies investigating author attitudes towards OA have used similar structured interviews (e.g., Quigley 2021).

considered comprehensive assessments of OA cultures. The interviews also helped articulate questions for the larger quantitative author survey and ultimately offer a valuable complement to the survey's results.

### *Author Survey*

The author survey was produced with Qualtrics and included 20 questions intended to be completed in five minutes or less (Appendix 2).<sup>6</sup> The survey was sent to all current and former University of Michigan Press authors, a list of 3,057 individuals. Around 28% ( $n = 806$ ) of the email list responded, though the number of respondents may reflect a higher rate of engagement due to the prevalence of outdated contact information.<sup>7</sup> The survey questions asked respondents to assess the perception, use, and function of OA within their disciplinary field as well as their own use and perception of OA. The survey results provided a quantitative understanding of OA cultures for the key fields under examination but also provided a broader picture of open access culture in the HSS in general.

Possible limitations of the survey must be stated to contextualize its results. First, like the interviews, many respondents suggested that their understanding of OA in their field was not comprehensive. Additionally, the population tended towards established academics with 59% ( $n = 475$ ) of respondents identifying as faculty with tenure and 14.9% ( $n = 120$ ) identifying as emeritus/a or retired faculty (Figure 1). It is difficult to make a blanket assumption on how academic rank affected the survey results.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the particularities of this population should be considered when considering the study's results.

### *Secondary Research*

In addition to data collected from interviews and surveys, the study included research of secondary scholarly literature and discipline-specific OA platforms, resources, and publishing venues. This included engaging with recent scholarship in the library and information sciences that investigates the history of and attitudes towards open access in academia.

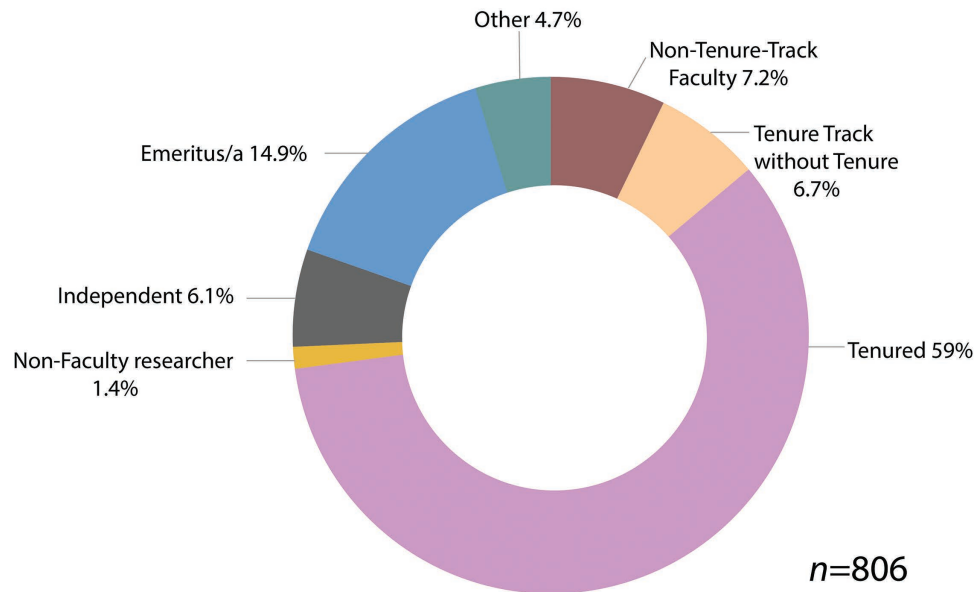
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6. The questions were partly adapted from a University of Michigan Library survey that was sent to University of Michigan faculty.

7. Except for the question regarding disciplinary affiliation, all questions in the survey were optional to answer. Therefore, when percentage statistics are given, they reflect the fraction of individuals answering that specific question rather than a total survey population.

8. As Rodriguez (2014, 605, 609) notes, "The literature is contradictory around the notion of younger authors being open to new publishing models. . . . Investigations looking at rank or tenure status also are inconsistent."

### What Is Your Current Academic Position?



**Figure 1.** Total Survey Respondents by Research Position

## Open Access in Three HSS Disciplines

The following sections present an interpretation of the open access cultures in Asian studies, classical studies, and political science. Each field is presented individually, which is followed by a side-by-side comparison of the three fields' survey data alongside survey results of the entire UMP author population.

### *Asian Studies*

Asian studies (the study of the history, culture, society, and languages of the continent of Asia) is a field with growing interest in OA focused on reaching international reading audiences. Asian studies is a large and diverse field, and generalizations about the discipline need to be contextualized by the field's significant diversity in research methods and bodies of evidence.<sup>9</sup> There are a number of venues for OA publications in Asian studies. University of Michigan Press hosts an OA e-book collection in Asian studies, as does University of Indiana Press. There are also several journals in Asian studies that are fully OA. These include JATI-Journal of Southeast Asian Studies and Asian Studies:

9. The discussion here is largely limited to English-language resources.



Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia. Many non-OA journals in Asian studies, as in other fields, are now making a certain number of their articles available as OA (e.g., *Modern Asian Studies*). Another OA resource in Asian studies is the CrossAsia platform based in Germany. CrossAsia is a portal for OA publications in Asian studies and includes an OA repository, OA journal platform, and OA e-book platform.

The existence of a growing OA infrastructure in Asian studies is echoed in the UMP survey results. Twenty individuals who responded to the UMP survey identified Asian studies as their primary disciplinary affiliation. Responses suggest that there is significant interest in open access in the field with 67% ( $n = 12$ ) of respondents answering that there was a “moderate amount” of interest in OA and 11% ( $n = 2$ ) stating there was “a lot” of interest. In addition, 67% ( $n = 12$ ) of survey respondents said that they “somewhat agree” that OA is growing in Asian studies. One of the most important factors for authors publishing OA in Asian studies is reaching international audiences. Sixty percent ( $n = 14$ ) of survey respondents said that reaching a more international audience was a “very important” reason to publish OA; respondents considered this the single most important reason to publish OA. One survey respondent addressed this directly, noting that “Open Access is incredibly important for scholars in many Asian countries to get access to research.” As one interviewee remarked, university libraries in Asian countries are much less likely to have a significant selection of English-language e-books (Lawson et al. 2021). But scholars in Asian studies view open access as essential not only for scholars working in Asian countries but also for reaching a broader non-scholarly international audience who are much less likely to have access to print versions of English-language books. Interestingly, only 35.29% ( $n = 6$ ) of Asian studies respondents noted “increasing equity and inclusion in access to knowledge” as a “very” important reason that scholars in their field publish OA, a significantly lower percentage than any of the other fields in the research study. This may be key for understanding how scholars in Asian studies frame the ethical imperatives of OA publishing.

Interviewees observed several concerns about OA publishing that exist within the field of Asian studies. One such concern is the possibility of post hoc censorship of OA titles in countries with authoritarian regimes and centralized control of media. Relatedly, another interviewee noted that the nature of access to archives in Asia can vary significantly based on the country in which the archive resides as well as the archive’s contents (Ryu et al. 2021). This poses a potential obstacle for obtaining permission to publish archival material in an open access work. Another concern that was expressed was the relationship between open access and print-based presses in Asia. It was suggested that the publication of works that are freely available online may undercut the profits of presses that have traditionally operated in print. For example, in Japan, as one interviewee explained, there remains a robust market for print scholarly monographs.

There are important considerations for open access publishing in the cultural context of Asia. The relationship of the print book market to growing digital OA publishing

needs to be further studied. One respondent to the survey who works in Japan said, “In my field in my country, open access materials are regarded as lower prestige than traditional paper publishing. But it will change in the future.” In the context of Asia, there is little scholarly literature on this subject. However, the emerging discourse on the global decolonization of OA is a promising approach to these problems, especially suggestions for transforming OA publishing into community-based communication (Mboa Nkoudou 2020; Piron 2018; Meagher 2021; Abbott and Tiffen 2019). Some scholars in Asian studies have also expressed concerns about the disappearance of the physical book (Ryu et al. 2021). This is especially true for scholars working on subjects that are related to the medium of the physical book (e.g., calligraphy or book culture). One interviewee remarked that there seem to be clear differences between OA practices in East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea compared with Southeast Asian countries such as India and Thailand. Scholarly communities are less firmly established in Southeast Asia, making OA particularly important for engaging with scholars and communities. In both East and Southeast Asia (e.g., Bangladesh, Indonesia, China), there have been national efforts to implement broad open access policies. However, it remains to be seen how these efforts will affect scholars working in the field of Asian studies.

### *Classical Studies*

Classical studies (also known as classics) is a traditional humanities field focused on the study of Greek, Roman, and Mediterranean history, literature, and archaeology.<sup>10</sup> In the past, classical studies has been seen as relatively conservative in its attitudes towards open access publishing (e.g., Osborne 2013). This conservatism can be linked to the field’s origins as a foundational liberal arts discipline as well as its traditional methods, especially a reliance on print books in research. One interviewee commented on the perceived hostility towards OA in classics saying, “I get the sense that people don’t like change rather than people don’t like open access.” Modes of prestige in classical studies are also entrenched. When asked about reservations towards OA in classical studies, one interviewee said, “it’s more of a prestige issue, ‘I need to get tenure, so I need to be published in a certain journal to make that easier on myself.’” The survey results seem to reflect this sentiment: “Prestige of venue” was considered “very important” to 91.04% ( $n = 61$ ) of respondents in classics when asked the most important factor in choosing where to publish their work, a statistically significant higher percentage than the total survey population (86.6%,  $n = 566$ ).<sup>11</sup> A 2016 study of open access publishing

10. Discussion here focuses less on archaeology since it was assessed in the UMP study as its own discipline.

11. A total of 77 respondents to the UMP survey identified classical studies as their primary disciplinary affiliation.



in classics found that nearly a quarter of peer-reviewed classics journals were print only (Ojennus 2017). The same study found that a slim majority of all classics journals offered some type of OA options for authors. The author of this study, however, cautioned that these results might either be a product of conservatism in classical studies or trends in the HSS as a whole (Ojennus 2017, 91).

The research conducted for UMP suggests that assumptions about the reluctance or conservatism towards OA in classics should be nuanced. The field is notably diverse, with an international scholarly community and many subfields that employ different methodologies and investigate different types of evidence. Approaches to open access vary between subfields. Papyrology and reception studies, as one interviewee added, are two areas with significant interest in open access. Moreover, classics has a deeper tie to the digital humanities than typically acknowledged. Free digital resources in classics, such as the Perseus Digital Library or the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, were established early in the development of the digital humanities and remain essential tools for students and researchers. There are also several OA classics journals, most notably *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, as well as top presses such as Oxford, Michigan, Cambridge, De Gruyter, and Routledge that now offer authors OA publishing options. Likewise, the open access digital library Persée publishes a significant portion of French language work in classics.

Classics as a discipline is also undergoing a cultural shift. With shrinking departments and lowering undergraduate enrollments across North America, some members of the field see a bleak future for the field. Many have responded with a sense of urgency to change how students are educated and how research in the field is disseminated. As one interviewee noted, “there’s this idea that classics is dying . . . and the way to change that is to let people have access to [research and publications].” This sentiment exists particularly among younger scholars who are interested in sharing their research with a broader audience. One interviewee remarked, “More junior faculty and early career scholars [are interested in OA]. The . . . more senior people get, the less they are concerned about it . . . which is a good sign . . . because it means the field is moving forth.” One comment by a classics scholar in the author survey stated, “Age is a factor in awareness of OA: the younger, the more aware.” This may also be reflected in the survey data. While the percentage of scholars who have published OA in classical studies was below the total population (40.3%,  $n = 31$  vs. 43.5%,  $n = 347$ ), the survey results suggest that OA is growing in classical studies and there is more interest in OA compared with the total population of the survey data. Another important trend in the field is a push to decolonize classics; efforts are being made for greater inclusion of DEI-related research subjects, such as race, gender, and disability. Scholars whose research focuses on such subjects appear to be more concerned with open access publishing. Ultimately, OA publishing seems to be growing in the field, both in specific subfields and in general.

*Political Science*

Political science is a large academic field with an international scholarly community and many subfields. In the last decade, political science has seen increased awareness around open access publishing. This is most evident in Europe where research projects funded by national government agencies have mandated open access publishing as a condition of funding (Schmidt and Kuchma 2012). Both in European and non-European contexts, scholars working with quantitative data appear to be most interested in the promotion of OA publishing. Specifically, they have advocated greater research transparency and open sharing of data sets. In North America, this is exemplified by DA-RT (Data Access & Research Transparency), launched in 2010 by scholars associated with the American Political Science Association (APSA). The initiative has pushed top journals in political science to establish data sharing norms and the principles of open research. One interviewee suggested that scholars advocating for data transparency and open access publishing may be a vocal minority. The interviewee noted that political scientists are “open to doing [open access publishing], but that they don’t spend a lot of time thinking about how it could radically transform this whole system and do something different; that’s not really their interest.” A political science survey respondent also said, “The lack of open access in my field (and most others) is a disgrace,” while another said, “In my view the main obstacle is additional effort required by researchers to prepare and upload their work for OA.” This resistance to OA may be reflected in the survey data where respondents associated with political science tended to express more conservative attitudes towards open access publishing compared with the total survey population (see below).

Some of the hesitations around OA publishing in political science are the result of the discipline’s relative size (compared with other fields in the HSS). The field’s size has allowed the success of predatory journals, which, for some, may have led to the conflation of open access and low quality (Soler and Wang 2019). This was echoed by one interviewee, who suggested concerns about perceived prestige and quality of OA publication venues; indeed, 34.64% ( $n = 53$ ) of political science survey respondents noted that concerns about the quality of OA publications was a reservation they had about publishing their work OA. As one survey respondent observed, “the biggest issue is acknowledgment by institutions that OA is a legitimate venue and deserves promotion.”

Nevertheless, data from the study’s interviews and author survey suggest the steady growth of OA publishing in political science. This is reflected in survey responses: 62% ( $n = 87$ ) of political science respondents agreed that OA is growing in their field.<sup>12</sup> One interviewee noted that open access is “much less frowned upon than it was, even when I started grad school in 2013, I don’t think that open access is synonymous with the kind of poor quality as it might have been once, at least, in the minds of some scholars. Part of that is prestige publishers publishing more open access.” There are an increasing number

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12. There were 156 political science survey respondents.

of venues for scholars in political science to publish their work open access. There are numerous reputable OA journals in the field, including *Research & Politics* and *Policy and Society*. Top presses for publishing political science monographs (e.g., Michigan, Springer/Palgrave, Cambridge, Oxford, and Taylor & Francis/Routledge) all publish some of their monographs open access, though OA publications generally remain a small percentage of their total catalog. There have been a few open access monograph initiatives in Europe for political science, including transcript's Open Library Political Science initiative.

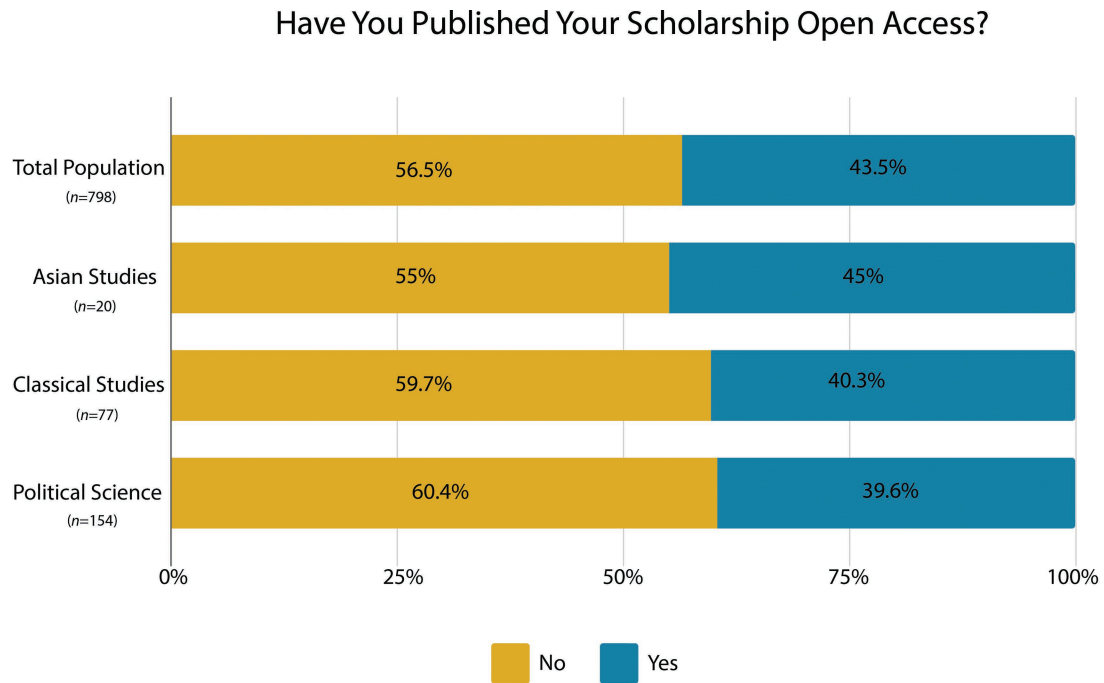
Several subpopulations in political science appear to have diverging orientations to open access publishing. For example, DA-RT has been criticized by scholars working with qualitative data (Monroe 2018). As one interviewee suggested, this criticism may stem from such scholarship's traditional communication norms that are more akin to the humanities rather than the social sciences. In addition, scholars working on media and communication may face difficulties in gaining permission to publish media data sets (e.g., television or radio) in open access works. Similar concerns exist for researchers working with human subjects or archives pertaining to sensitive geo-political contexts (Monroe 2018, 144–146). In contrast, scholars working on subjects of law, where much of the data exists in public records, may be more receptive to open access.

Political science also has a notable Green OA culture, with several disciplinary digital repositories, including the APSA Preprints (APSA's prestige in the discipline makes this a significant OA benchmark). There is also increasing interest in releasing OA works that cluster around current events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared with most fields, more respondents in political science listed "getting the attention of policy-makers" as an important reason why scholars in the field publish OA; 30.4% ( $n = 38$ ) of respondents said this was "very important," and 56% ( $n = 70$ ) said it was "somewhat important." Political science respondents also noted that receiving more citations was important, with 49% ( $n = 60$ ) saying it was a "very important" reason to publish OA (compared with the total population of 31.5%,  $n = 179$ ). This was echoed by an interviewee who argued that one advantage of OA was that it allowed more people to read their work and "it's better to be cited as much as possible . . . in my experience . . . the stuff that I have published, open access has been . . . more well cited." In a large field like political science, scholars can use OA publishing to make their research more visible.

## Classical Studies, Asian Studies, and Political Science in Comparison with the Total Survey Population

### *Have You Published Your Research OA?*

Survey respondents were asked whether they had ever published their research open access (Figure 2). Among the three fields, Asian studies respondents were the only group



**Figure 2.** Survey responses of Asian Studies, Classical Studies, and Political Science scholars to question “Have you Published your Research Open Access?”

that had published at higher rates than the total survey population. Respondents from classical studies and political science answered at rates below the total survey population. Of the 29 discipline categories in the survey, for only seven fields had the majority of respondents published their work OA.

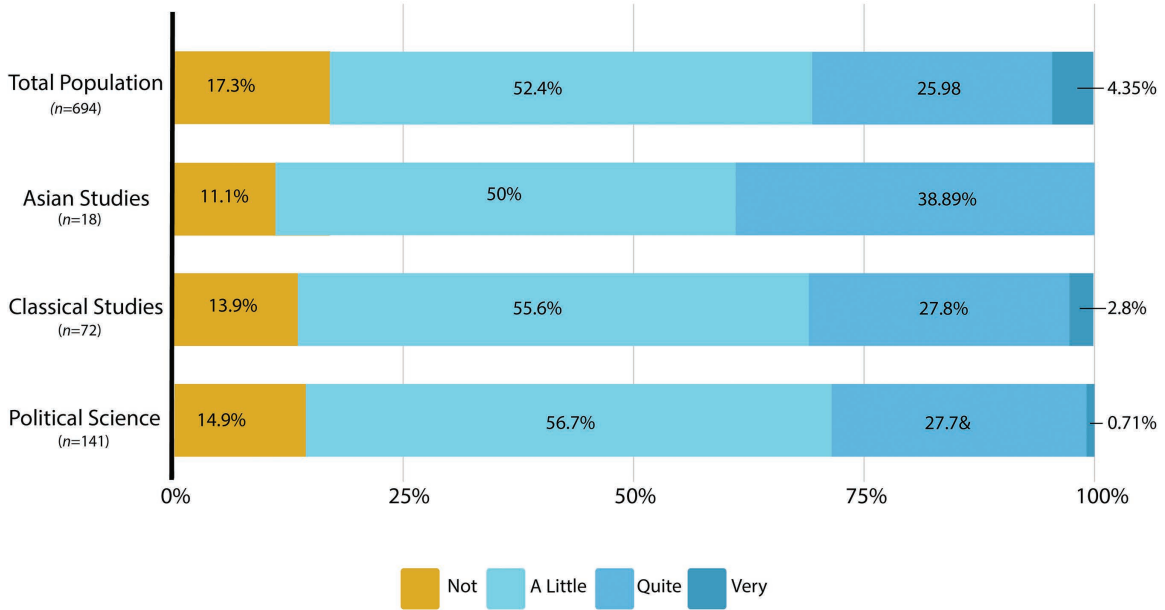
#### *How Knowledgeable Are Members of Your Field About Open Access?*

When asked whether members of their field were knowledgeable about open access, respondents could choose “generally not knowledgeable,” “a little knowledgeable,” “quite knowledgeable,” or “very knowledgeable” (Figure 3). For all three fields, respondents replied that their fields were not knowledgeable at lower rates than the total survey population (17.3%,  $n = 120$ ). However, none of the three fields described members of their field as very knowledgeable at greater rates than the total survey population (4.35%,  $n = 30$ ). Asian studies had the highest percentage of respondents who said their field was quite knowledgeable about OA, followed by classical studies and political science at similar rates, all above the total survey population.

#### *Is Open Access Growing in Your Field?*

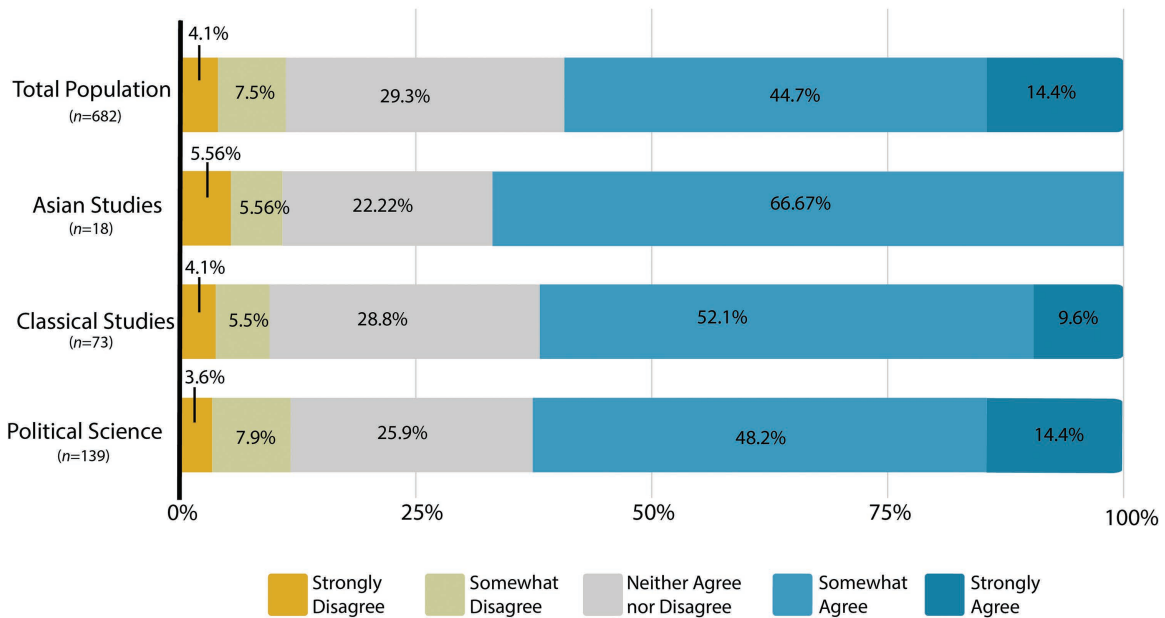
When asked whether open access was growing in their field (Figure 4), Asian studies and political science respondents disagreed at rates similar to the total survey

### How Knowledgeable Are Members of Your Field About Open Access?



**Figure 3.** Survey responses of Asian Studies, Classical Studies, and Political Science scholars to question “How Knowledgeable are Members of your Field about Open Access?”

### Is Open Access Growing in Your Field?



**Figure 4.** Survey Responses of Asian Studies, Classical Studies, and Political Science Scholars to Question “Is Open Access Growing in Your Field?”

population (11.6%,  $n = 79$ ), while the classical studies response was slightly lower (9.6%,  $n = 7$ ). All three fields agreed that OA was growing in their field at rates higher than the total survey population (59.1%,  $n = 403$ ).

The survey results of Asian studies, classical studies, and political science demonstrate potential differences in OA attitudes and practice among these three fields. Such a quantitative comparison demonstrates the utility of the OA culture framework in discerning subtle variations in OA publishing among fields in the HSS. However, for some metrics, the quantitative data also show evident similarities, an equally important conclusion drawn from the OA culture framework. Such similarities may be the result of specific disciplinary characteristics, such as a shared methodology, or they may be the product of these fields' existence within the broader economic and cultural regimes of the HSS. Comparing individual fields to the HSS survey population in aggregate further accentuates the particularities of each field's OA culture.

## Open Access Culture across HSS

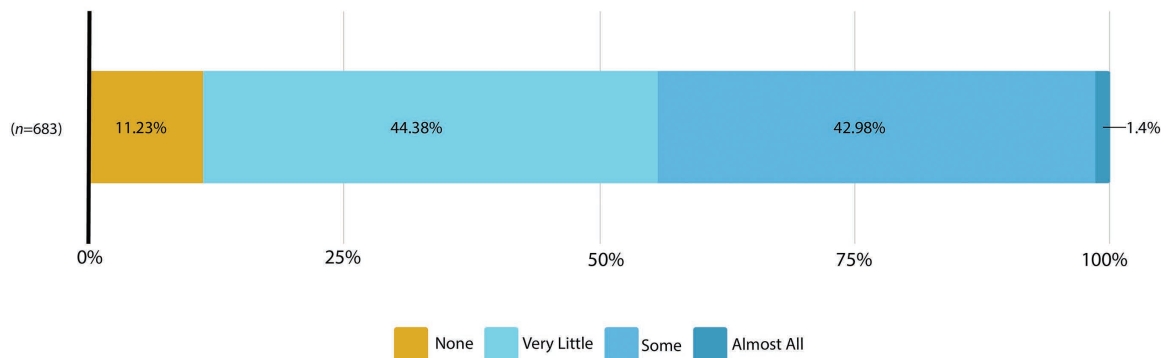
The survey results for individual fields suggest disciplinary affiliation is only one of many axes that can be used to understand attitudes and practices of OA publishing (Rodriguez 2014). As one interviewee noted, an author's attitude towards OA "depends less on the discipline in some ways, and more on their own situation." It is important to recognize the intersectionality of scholarly identities and the potential significance of university affiliation, nationality, race, gender, and career stage. While the previous discussion used the open access culture framework to describe OA usage and attitudes in specific academic fields, the following sections discuss key themes in OA scholarly publishing relevant to all HSS fields, using data and research that was gathered during the UMP study. This discussion broadens and contextualizes the findings concerning individual academic fields presented above.

### *The Normalization of OA Publishing in the HSS*

Research from this study suggests that OA publishing is increasingly becoming normalized across scholarly communities in the HSS. This seems to stem, in part, from an increased understanding of OA. Previous research has argued that scholars in the HSS generally trail their peers in other disciplines in OA knowledge (Severin et al. 2020, 15), but this may be changing. Nearly all interviewees noted an increased awareness of open access publishing among their colleagues. When answering the question "To what extent are members of your main field of research knowledgeable about OA publishing?" only 17% ( $n = 120$ ) of survey respondents answered that "they are generally not knowledgeable." A 2010 survey conducted by OAPEN researching open access attitudes



To What Extent Do the Most Prestigious Publication Outlets in Your Field (Presses, Journals, Proceedings, etc.) Publish Work Open Access?



**Figure 5.** Responses of Entire Survey Population to Question: “To What Extent do the Most Prestigious Publication Outlets in your Field (Presses, Journals, Proceedings, etc.) Publish Work Open Access?”

among HSS scholars found that 30% ( $n = 74$ ) of their survey respondents were unfamiliar with open access as a concept (Adema and Rutten 2010, 110–111). These data points use different metrics of OA awareness but still may indicate a historical shift in OA knowledge during the last 10 years. This was suggested by one interviewee who observed that “a lot of those sorts of misconceptions [about OA publishing] have, for the most part, fallen by the wayside for humanities and humanistic social sciences folks.”

OA normalization also stems from the increased number of OA publications in the HSS. There are a growing number of ways for scholars to publish OA; many publication venues, which are not OA by mission or design, are designating a certain percentage of their catalogs to be OA.<sup>13</sup> And, as noted above, many of these publication venues are considered to be prestigious by various disciplines. The survey data reflects this; only 11.23% ( $n = 64$ ) of respondents said that the most prestigious venues in their field published *no work* open access (Figure 5).<sup>14</sup> This has important implications for evaluating the relationship between publication prestige and OA. For scholars in the HSS, prestige of a publication venue is the key consideration in determining the value of a research publication (Pyne et al. 2019, 9). This was echoed in the author survey results; 86.68% ( $n = 566$ ) of authors said that the prestige of publication venue was

13. Much work that is published OA in non-OA venues is the result of agreements between publishers and academic institutions that eliminate or discount article processing charges (e.g., an agreement between Elsevier and University of Michigan). One interviewee suggested that such agreements have made OA a seamless choice for authors, decreasing their resistance to an unknown or unfamiliar publishing format.

14. This calculation does not include the 16.54% of respondents who answered “unknown” to the question “To what extent do the most prestigious publication outlets in your field (presses, journals, proceedings, etc.) publish work Open Access?”

“very important” when choosing where to publish their work, ranking it above both thematic/subject fit (73.97%,  $n = 469$ ) and no cost to publish (63.77%,  $n = 396$ ). Thus, the increase in OA publications in prestigious publication venues may be changing the perception of OA; only 7.57% ( $n = 58$ ) of all survey respondents said that “publishing OA would disadvantage me in tenure, promotion, or professional advancement.” Even fewer respondents answered that they had “been discouraged from doing so by others in my field” (5.09%,  $n = 39$ ). In addition, one interviewee also suggested that OA-only venues are becoming more prestigious in the field because they are becoming older and thus more reputable.

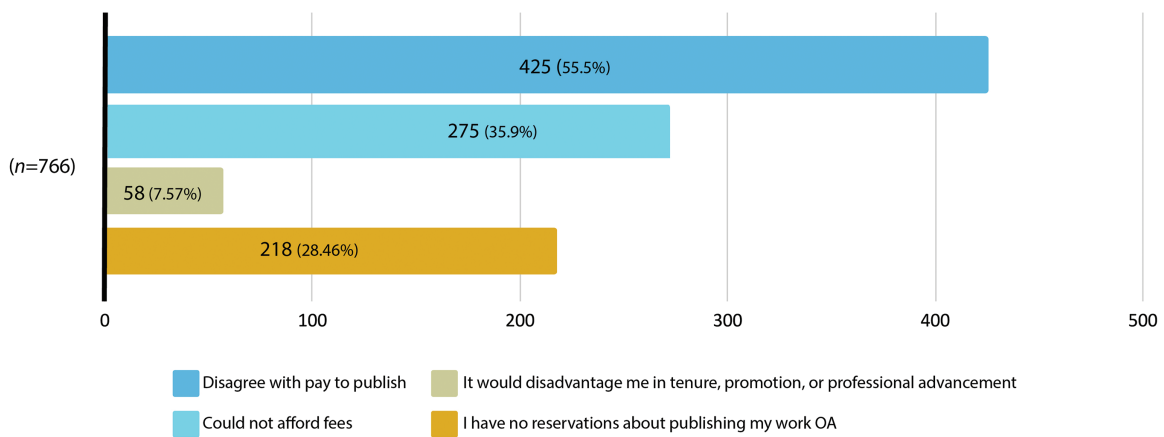
While most survey respondents had never published their work OA (56.5%,  $n = 451$ ), survey results and interviews demonstrated that interest in OA was growing across all fields; 77% ( $n = 524$ ) of survey respondents agreed that more work in their field will be published OA in the next 10 years, while 59% ( $n = 403$ ) of respondents agreed that interest in OA is growing in their field. This has been echoed by one recent survey of Springer Nature authors that argued, “The majority of authors agree that all future scholarly books should be OA” (Pyne et al. 2019, 2).

### *Funding*

Previous studies have shown that funding remains a key constraint for OA publishing in the HSS (Severin et al. 2020). The centrality of monograph publishing in HSS disciplines, the prevalence of article processing charge (APC) models, and the relatively small research funds for HSS scholars have prevented OA Gold from being a sustainable funding model. Nearly every author interviewee in the study noted that funding remained a significant obstacle for themselves or for their colleagues in publishing OA. This was also evident in the total survey data. Responding to the question “What reservations do you have about publishing your work open access?” the two most popular answers were “I do not think I should have to pay fees to publish my work” and “I could not afford the fees” (Figure 6). When asked “What are the main obstacles for scholars publishing OA in your field?” the most common response was “lack of funding” (64.08%,  $n = 437$ ). Furthermore, no cost to publish was the third most important factor for survey respondents when selecting a venue to publish (63.77%,  $n = 396$ ).

During interviews, several participants discussed the disparities in funding for OA publishing across their field and within the HSS more broadly. One interviewee said that their most recent monograph was published OA only because they possessed sufficient departmental research funds at their relatively well-endowed state institution. They said that this would not have been possible at their previous institution, a public university with a smaller endowment. Another interviewee working

## What Reservations Do You Have About Publishing Your Work Open Access?



**Figure 6.** Responses of Entire Survey Population to Question: “What Reservations do you have about Publishing your Work Open Access?”

at a minimally funded public research university said, “I don’t really have a lot of grant money . . . and for open access it’s just not feasible.” The aggregate survey data do not offer a clear picture of the relationship between institutional type and funding opportunities. Answering the question “What reservations do you have about publishing your work open access?” 44.4% ( $n = 4$ ) of scholars at community colleges said they could not afford to publish OA, while 39.6% ( $n = 176$ ) of scholars at public research universities, 31.3% ( $n = 45$ ) of scholars at private research universities, and 23.8% ( $n = 20$ ) of scholars at private colleges/liberal arts colleges answered that cost was a reservation for publishing OA. These results may suggest that authors working at private research universities or private colleges/liberal arts colleges generally have more access to funding for OA publishing. At public research universities, it seems, there is a greater variation in institutional funding. Instructional rank is another key factor in determining access to funding for publishing. One interviewee noted their status as a non-tenure-track faculty member prohibited them from applying for certain OA publishing funds. As an example, many institutions bar non-tenure-track faculty from applying for Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem (TOME) grants.<sup>15</sup> Both interviews and survey results suggest that personal research grants and funding at home institutions remain the primary ways in which scholars in the HSS fund OA publishing.

15. E.g., the Ohio State University and University of Michigan.

### *Preferences for Digital and Print Publishing*

The continuation of print publishing remains a central concern for HSS scholars considering OA publishing. Recent research suggests that HSS scholars find the use of print books to be more engrossing and pleasurable, making them central to the entire research process (Watchorn and Zelter 2022; Pyne et al. 2019, 3). Several comments from the survey reflect this: “I’ve done a lot of open access publishing in the humanities (monograph, edited volumes, articles, exhibition catalogs, and more). I’m firmly against OA if there is no paper version. Absolutely opposed in that case.” Another comment reads, “Paper publishing is important.” Finally, an interviewee who reported that they strove to publish all their work OA also noted, “There’s something about it being a physical thing out in the world that appeals,” adding that they would be opposed to writing a digital-only monograph.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these preferences for print media, the UMP study detected shifts in digital publishing attitudes, shifts which may be the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic, several interviewees suggested, bore a new literacy around different types of digital publishing licenses. As one interviewee observed, “now [scholars] actually know . . . the different kinds of e-books.” Scholars who may have been adamantly opposed to working with e-books before the pandemic were faced with a new reality of teaching and conducting research without access to physical books. This was particularly true for digital open access materials, which adapted well to virtual classroom environments. As another interviewee remarked, “The format preferences that [scholars] might have had in the past . . . like deeply held convictions of . . . ‘I love print, I only use print’. . . just went out the window.” It is thus essential to consider the relationship between print publishing and OA when considering author preferences and attitudes.

### **Conclusion: OA Cultures for Author-Centered Publishing**

The research presented in this article was initiated by the University of Michigan Press in order to aid the implementation of its OA monograph initiative, Fund to Mission. UMP authors are a diverse population with specific publication needs. The information collected during this research project addresses these needs as UMP transitions to

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16. The findings from Fenlon et al. 2017’s study of humanities authors suggests that preference for print is not necessarily related to the publishing process itself. Their survey shows that humanities authors found every aspect of the digital publishing process to be more “unchallenging” than “challenging.”

publishing academic monographs primarily in an open access format. While the discipline-specific data generated for Asian studies, classical studies, and political science are tailored to the publishing profile of the University of Michigan Press, it is hoped that the framework of open access culture may be productively replicated by other presses. To that end, the following are fundamental suppositions that may guide similar OA initiatives.

- 1) **Identify and address OA risk.** Despite recent growth in open access, the majority of HSS scholarship is not published OA. Real and perceived risks remain for researchers choosing to publish their scholarship OA. In order to protect authors, presses can identify such risks, whether they follow disciplinary norms or other factors, such as institutional promotion standards. Great care is needed when discussing both real and perceived risks of OA publishing. Identifying OA publication educational resources and making a list of significant OA publications in a particular discipline are useful ways to generate constructive discussion with authors and negotiate OA misperceptions.
- 2) **OA definition will differ by author.** Researchers develop their conception of open access through encounters and practices within their own field. When an author chooses to publish their work OA, they do so with an idiosyncratic comprehension of OA. For some, OA is part of an expansive ethical framework of accessibility; for others, OA is one feature among many in the suite of digital publishing. Understanding these differences in OA perception allows publishers to frame OA in ways that are suitable to individual researchers.
- 3) **Identify how disciplinary norms are generated.** Individual academic fields generate norms around publication prestige and communication at different scales. It is important to understand that for some disciplines, such norms may be generated among subfields, while for other fields, such norms may follow broader trends in the HSS. How such norms are formed varies significantly, but preexisting communication infrastructure is a key factor. While OA is being normalized across the HSS, different fields may be re-producing or resisting this normalization in specific ways.
- 4) **OA can mean compromise.** The OA format has limitations; choosing to make a work OA means accepting such limitations. It is important that authors who are choosing to make their work OA, whether at the start or the end of the publication process, understand the nature of such limitations. For example, scholars who are working in media-rich fields may have certain constraints in securing permission to publish OA. These limitations should be identified quickly and feature centrally in conversations between editors and authors.

This article has presented the framework of open access culture as one way that presses might approach OA publishing programs. The framework is intended to organize research around the specificities of open access within different academic communities in order to align the needs of individual scholars with innovations in open scholarly communication. This, it is hoped, can promote an author-centered approach to open access publishing.

## Acknowledgments

Thank you to the anonymous reviewer whose recommendations strengthened this article. A most hearty thank you to Emma Vecellio and Kristen Twardowski who supervised my internship project with the University of Michigan Press, the work of which is partly presented here. Thank you to Craig Smith for his guidance in the IRB approval process and to Charles Watkinson, who has offered invaluable support throughout this project and first suggested I submit my findings as a journal article. Thank you to Aaron Frankl for his notes on the article's figures, to Sheira Cohen for providing advice and resources in the initial stages of the project, and to Leila Braun for her encouragement and revision suggestions. Most of all, thank you to the authors, editors, and librarians who participated in this project's interviews and surveys.

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## Appendix 1: OA Author Interview Template

### Part 1: Introduction

1. Can I record this interview? (Confidential)
2. Explain my project; do you have any questions about my project?
3. Explain the structure of the interview.

### Part 2: Personal Experiences with OA

- 1. Have you published research Open Access?**
  - a. What was the modality of the publication (journal article, monograph)? i.
  - b. Why did you publish your work Open Access? i.
- 2. Describe the process of publishing your work Open Access from seeking a venue to reception by readers**
  - a. Did you run into obstacles? i.
  - b. What was feedback like from colleagues and other members of your field? i.
  - c. Are you interested in publishing your work Open Access in the future? Why or why not? i.

### Part 3: Perceptions of OA in Author's Field (from experiences researching, working with colleagues, teaching, etc.)

- 1. To the best of your knowledge, to what extent are members of your field knowledgeable and enthusiastic about OA publishing?**
  - a. Why or why not?
    - i.
  - b. Are there ongoing conversations in your field about best practices in publishing? If so, where are these conversations occurring?
    - i.
  - c. Do you think interest in OA is increasing in your field? Are there recent events that have changed the way researchers in your field are thinking about OA?
    - i.
- 2. For what reasons do researchers in your field publish their work OA? (e.g., ethical concerns, reach)**
  - a. Has this changed over time?
    - i.

3. **What, if any, are the primary obstacles for authors in your main disciplinary area publishing OA? (e.g. concerns about prestige, etc.)**
  - a.
4. **What are the primary sources of funding for authors who wish to publish their research OA?**
  - a.
5. **Are the most prestigious publishing venues in your discipline (journals, presses) publishing some or all of their pieces OA?**
  - a. In your field, does whether a work is published OA hurt its perceived prestige, credibility, or value (regardless of venue)?
    - i.
6. **Are there certain populations within your field that are more or less likely to publish their work Open Access? (e.g., tenured faculty or members of a certain subdiscipline)**
  - a.
7. **Do you have any questions for me or anything you would like to add to the conversation?**
  - a.

## Appendix 2



### Introduction

Thank you for taking the following survey about Open Access (OA) publishing. The survey will inform University of Michigan Press in its efforts to convert 75% of its monographs to Open Access by 2023. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes. All responses will remain confidential.

### Part 1

*In which scholarly field do you primarily publish?*

If you selected “other” for the previous question, or publish in different, or more specific subfield(s), please list here

*Which of the following best describes your current academic position?*

- Non-tenure-track faculty
- Tenure-track faculty without tenure
- Faculty with tenure
- Non-faculty researcher
- Independent scholar
- Emeritus/a
- Other

*Which of the following best describes your current academic institution?*

- Community/two year college
- Public research university
- Private research university

- Liberal arts college
- Non-degree conferring research institute
- I am not currently affiliated with any academic institutions
- Other

## Part 2: Personal Views on Open Access Publishing

Have you ever published your research in an Open Access format?

- Yes
- No

In which of the following formats have you published your work Open Access? (Choose all that apply)

- Journal Article
- Book Chapter
- Monograph
- Data Set
- Textbook
- Other

*How many times have you published your research Open Access?*

- 1
- 2–3
- 4–5
- 5+

*Which of the following would be, or has been, an important reason for publishing your research Open Access? (Choose all that apply)*

- Increasing equity and inclusion in access to knowledge
- Meeting funder requirements
- Boosting career progression
- Receiving more citations
- Receiving more media attention for work



- Reaching a more international audience
- Getting more attention for work from policymakers
- Other

What reservations do you have about publishing your work Open Access? (Choose all that apply)

- I have been discouraged from doing so by others in my field
- Publishing OA would disadvantage me in tenure, promotion, or professional advancement
- I do not think my work is relevant to a larger audience
- I would lose out on financial opportunities if I did so
- I could not afford to pay the fees to publish my work
- I do not think I should have to pay fees to publish my work
- I have concerns about the quality of OA publications
- There are copyright issues related to the media or archives I work with
- Other
- I have no reservations about publishing my work Open Access

### Part 3: Perceptions of OA in Author's Publishing Field

To what extent are members of your main field of research knowledgeable about OA publishing?

- They are generally not knowledgeable
- They are a little knowledgeable
- They are quite knowledgeable
- They are very knowledgeable

To the best of your knowledge, how much interest in Open Access publishing is there in your main field of research?

- None at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

*For researchers in your field, how important are the following reasons for choosing to publish research Open Access?*

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Increasing equity and inclusion in access to knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting funder requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving more citations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reaching a more international audience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting more attention for research from policymakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generating more media interest in research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>			

*Which of the following are obstacles or reasons why authors in your field do not publish their research Open Access? (Choose all that apply)*

- Lack of knowledge about Open Access
- Mistrust of Open Access
- Lack of funding to publish their work Open Access
- Concerns about copyright with media or archives
- Concerns about promotion or prestige within the field
- Interest in royalties
- Concerns about predatory journals
- Other

*What are the primary sources of funding to publish Open Access for researchers in your field? (Choose all that apply)*

- Field-specific grants and awards
- National level grants and awards
- Funding available at home institution to researchers across fields
- Personal research funds granted by academic departments
- Library funds from home institution specifically for publishing
- Other

*Do you think interest in Open Access is growing in your field?*

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Do you think more work in your field will be published Open Access in the next 10 years?

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

*In what venues are conversations about Open Access and best practices in publishing occurring in your field? (Choose all that apply)*

- Special edition journals
- Conference sessions
- Entire conferences
- Monographs or edited volumes
- Word of mouth
- Social media
- There are no ongoing conversations about Open Access or best practices in publishing in my field
- Other

*To what extent do the most prestigious publication outlets in your field (presses, journals, proceedings, etc.) publish work Open Access?*

- Almost all is published Open Access
- Some is published Open Access

- Very little is published Open Access  
 None is published Open Access  
 I do not know

*How important are the following for researchers in your field when choosing a venue to publish their work?*

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very Important
Prestige of venue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal connection to editor(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thematic subject and fit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No cost to publish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very Important
Ability to publish Open Access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likelihood of having work accepted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Digital publication capabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>			

Please share any other comments you have about attitudes towards Open Access and or the nature of Open Access in your field of research.

### *Follow-up*

Would you be interested in discussing Open Access in your discipline with a member of UM Press?

- Yes (please provide email address)  
 No